Interoperability In Virginia

Panel Name: **Care and Feeding – Lessons in Maintaining a Radio Cache**

Speakers:
- **Lieutenant Wes Rogers**, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department
- **Lieutenant Alex Fitch,** Fairfax City Fire Department
- **Master Firefighter John Freeburger**, Montgomery County (MD) Fire & Rescue Department

Question and Answer Session:

**Q:	How do you get the MS Access software? Hampton Roads is establishing a cache in Hampton Roads and it would be helpful to have access to that software.**
A:	MS Access software developed specifically for this system. This was done in house.

**Q:	What about coverage in tunnels?**
A:	We have had many practice scenarios with Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). We tried digital and had no problems with that. There are no obvious pros and cons in using analog or digital.

**Q:	When you deploy the cache do you see yourself as the communications unit leader (COML)?**
A:	We don't push ourselves into any management team. We will offer command what we are there to supply. We come with the cache, experience, and to assist. We don't want to push anything. If a jurisdiction has a COML, we fall into that unit.

**Q:	What is your maintenance budget?**
A:	We looked at time, batteries, etc., and calculated that it would cost about $56,000 for one year's worth of training, maintenance of the code plug, and batteries. I am trying to get it into the budget for the county to take it over, but now we are fortunate to receive grant funding

Q: Who receives the emergency call activation?
A: We have an informational reference guide that depicts the operational zone. You should not leave the zone. When you begin tracking, a designated ID shows up for each radio and will register what event the radio was deployed to and to which practitioner.

Q: If someone strays out of the zone, will the dispatcher see which radio it was on?
A: Yes, an identification code will show up. The radio is specific to the zone, but there are people who will know to which zone the radio was deployed. We give the other party a quick lesson on the radio.

AUDIENCE COMMENT: The Center for National Response is a great training center that can simulate tunnels and explosions with an outstanding facility. It is an all hazards training facility, and is not well advertised

Q: How did you choose the NiCad batteries?
A: The NiCad batteries had a better shelf life. We did some research on them, and found that nickel metal hard drives can only give out 350 charges. You can bring NiCads back to life.

Q: Have you planned for a VHF or UHF cache?
A: We are going to have to look at that and decide what we want for the State Cache.